

Stanley H. Abrons
135-15, 83d Avenue
Jamaica 35, L. I., N. Y.

May 25, 1961

Mr. Eric P. Newman

Dear Mr. Newman:

Some time ago, February 9 of this year, to be exact, you were kind enough to answer a query I sent you in regard to the Bar Cent. I must make my apologies for this very delayed reply, but a serious illness prevented me from writing.

I have been doing work on this piece and have turned up some promising leads, centering around Philadelphia and Trenton...possibly pointing to an entirely so-far-unsuspected provenance for this coin. I shall send you all this shortly before I publish. Now, that brings me to the second topic: You mentioned that you were on the verge of publishing some of the results of your own researches. It is quite possible that our work may have duplicated. I do not by any means wish to step on your toes...as you have priority. However, I do not want to hold up my own work. Could we collaborate? Publish jointly? Or, if you do not wish to, then could you send me what you have unearthed, and I'd then give you credit as a contributor and you could do the same for me? I am quite new at this and do not know the proper protocol and etiquette for these things and I want to create friends instead of enemies. Also, the field is so large, there is room for all and I certainly could use any information.

I have so far found nothing in NYC papers of the period, but I am still searching. You said you might send me further suggestions. I would appreciate them, as I would appreciate anything. I have recently been to the ANS museum and there was shown a Bar Half-cent. Half-size planchet and the letters are not intertwined but in a row, thus: U S A. The S is longer than the other two letters. This is a unique specimen but, unfortunately, holed at the top. The people at ANS were so kind as to offer me the use of their negatives and the use of their photographic equipment.

Well, that about says what I wished to convey to you, except that I have recently seen a Bar Cent on an oval planchet. Most unusual. I can get it for you if you wish, as it is in the hands of a dealer. Please advise.

May I hear from you soon?

Most sincerely,

Stanley H. Abrons
Stanley H. Abrons

June 6, 1961

Mr. Stanley H. Abrons
135-15 83rd Avenue
Jamaica 35, Long Island
New York

Dear Mr. Abrons:

I did not expect to hear from you again but I am glad that you are well and that you have been working on the Bar Cent project.

In your letter you suggest that we publish an article jointly and it would give me a great deal of pleasure to work with you on such a project if you have turned up some new material. Perhaps if you can tell me what your leads are I might be able to help you develop those leads.

The Bar Half Cent, at A.N.S., is a fake and is mentioned in the Mickley sale. There are other fakes which I have in my memoranda as well.

As far as the Bar Cent on an oval planchet is concerned, I would be very interested in having the dealer forward it to me. It is perfectly possible that it is a Bolen copy as, on occasion, Bolen stamped his coins on a larger sheet of copper.

Please let me hear from you promptly as to the foregoing suggestion as I am delighted to do everything I can to encourage proper numismatic research.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb

Stanley H. Abrons
135-15, 83d Avenue
Jamaica 35, L. I., N. Y.

June 9, 1961

Mr. Eric P. Newman
c/o Edison Brothers Stores, Inc.
400 Washington Avenue
St. Louis 2, Missouri

Dear Mr. Newman:

Thank you for your letter of 6/6/61.

To answer in order: I might as well start out by telling you what I have unearthed to date. A) A statement, by Dickeson, that the BC was made in Philadelphia and circulated in NYC. B) A Statement in a New Jersey (Trenton) paper of 1785, describing many of the BC's circulating in Trenton. C) A statement, in a Philadelphia paper, that coinage was made, on an experimental basis, for contract to the Congress, by Harper (he of the 1791 Washington Cent fame). If you put them all together they spell a lot. I reason thusly:

[Bushnell]
Crosby merely mentions a secondhand source/and does not document it.
There is a mention of the things in Trenton
There is a mention of experimental coinage in Phila. at the same time.
Phila. is near Trenton
Was it atest area for circulating a new coinage?

Now: I must still go to Trenton and Newark, for the NJ and TR historical archives respectively. Search of NYC papers still goes on in parallel but with no mention of the coin. I think this is highly suspicious. In addition, Congressional records are to be searched

A question: Why is Crosby so widely credited and not Dickeson?

Your comments would be appreciated. Also your material.

Now, re the ovalplanchet BC. Breen has seen it and says it is genuine. It has the little tit on the back bar, supposedly a diagnostic feature. Your comments. As for the B-1/2-C, it is mentioned in Crosby...and not as a fake. To my mind, another score contra Crosby. I think he should be entirely ~~re~~ rewritten and reedited.

Sincerely,

Stanley H. Abrons

P. S. If many BC's in circ in Trenton, what ever became of them? Melted down? Still extant someplace? That's why I must to Trenton.

June 13, 1961

Mr. Stanley N. Abrons
135-15 83d Avenue
Jamaica 35, Long Island
New York

Dear Mr. Abrons:

Your letter of June 9, 1961 indicates that you have some new material and I am delighted that you have located it. Would you be nice enough to send me a copy of the Trenton, New Jersey paper indicating that the bar cents are circulating in Trenton. This is a surprise to me in view of the enclosed excerpt which was also published in Trenton on December 19, 1785 and which is erroneously stated to have been published on November 12, 1785. I would also like a copy of your excerpt from the Philadelphia paper. These are new to me and they are enough of a contribution to have us pool our resources to write the article.

Bushnell was very often a liar and a rumor monger, which Crosby knew, but could not do anything about in those cases where Crosby could not find the facts. Dickeson is generally inaccurate, being a romantic type of archaeologist, doctor, and romanticist.

I think it is important for you to comb the New Jersey Gazette, unless you have already done so, for the period from January 1, 1784 through December 31, 1787, for all articles on coinage, if you can do that. I do not believe it is on microfilm but there are several complete files available to you. I do not believe you will find anything in the Congressional records. I have searched the papers of the Continental Congress and the National Archives indices for matters relating to copper coinage during the period. I have done all this in connection with my work on Fugio copper.

Do not criticize Crosby because his is the first documented book on early American coinage. Naturally there are a lot of things he did not know but, generally speaking, he is accurate.

Mr. Stanley H. Abrons

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June 13, 1961

You mention the little tit on the back bar of the oval planchet bar cent. There is a fake with the so-called tit and this is not a die break as on the genuine.

We may not be able to call the Bar Cent a cent because it probably was just a copper. The Federal government had not adopted the cent designation until October, 1786.

I am sure you are getting as big a charge out of wading through these mysteries as I always do and I look forward to receiving the two excerpts which you refer to.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,

ERIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb

August 23, 1961

Mr. Stanley H. Abrons
135-15 83d Avenue
Jamaica 35, Long Island
New York

Dear Mr. Abrons:

I have not heard from you since I last wrote
you and wonder what is going on.

I am enclosing page 26 of the COIN WORLD
of August 18 in the event you did not see
it.

Sincerely yours,

EPIC P. NEWMAN

EPN/atb

STANLEY J. BOONS
135 E. 4th Avenue
Jamaica 30, L.I.N.Y.

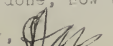
October 30, 1961

Dear Mr. Newman:

Although, I think, the correspondence has progressed far enough for first names, by this time. That is, if my dilatoriness has not antagonized you too much. I must plead a variety of causes for my non-correspondence, but all of them are not worth mentioning, so I won't.

Now: the quotation you want is on the appended sheet. I was under the impression that I had sent it to you some time ago. On reading it, don't you think that it indicates an American origin or at least a plenitude of pieces, much at variance with the present rarity? I should like to know where they all got to. Is there a hoard someplace? Also, if ex-Britain, why the appearance in NJ? And also, if a NYCity phenomenon, why the NJ advent. Incidentally, I have not, repeat NOT been able to find one single, solitary reference to the things in the NYCity papers of the period.

Negative evidence, admittedly, but still evidence of a sort. There should have been some mention if the things had any economic effect in a still small-city environment.

Now, I have recently come out of my torpor (caused by a broken bone in my left foot) to go to Princeton and start work in the Univ. Library there. I expect to go back soon, so is there anything you want looked up? I have a feeling that the BCent is of a provenance of the S. Jersey-Phila. area and will continue to dig there. Let me know, therefore, what you now think of the BCent as publishable material (I don't think it is really ready yet) and what you now would like to have done, now that I am mobile again. Most sincerely, 

Excerpt from the New Jersey Gazette
Monday, December 19, 1785

Trenton, Dec. 19, 1785. A new and curious kind of coppers have lately made their appearance in New Jersey, the novelty and high gloss of which keeps them in circulation.--These coppers are in fact similar to Continental buttons without eyes; on one side are thirteen stripes, but on the other, U. S. A. as was usual on the soldier's buttons. If Congress does not take the establishment of a Mint into consideration, or carry it into effect, it is possible that the next coin which may come into circulation, as we have a variety of them, will be the soldiers' old pewter buttons, for they are nearly as valuable, as the coppers above described and hardly so plentiful.

Photostats of the above may be obtained from the New Jersey and the New York Historical Societies: Newark and NYCity respectively.

November 6, 1961

Mr. Stanley H. Abrons
135-15 83rd Avenue
Jamaica 35
Long Island, New York

Dear Mr. Abrons:

Thank you for your letter of October 31, 1961. Fortunately, I can now straighten out the confusion.

I sent you the December 19, 1785 excerpt on June 13, 1961 and now you are sending it to me. You, however, have made a major copying error as you indicate the excerpt in the second line is New Jersey whereas the text is New York. Your whole New Jersey thesis unfortunately collapses.

Referring back to your letter of June 9, your excerpt from the Philadelphia paper I am not familiar with, but it is obviously completely in error because Harper did not make the 1791 Washington Cents and all the stories about Harper which were published one hundred years ago are about one-tenth true.

My advice, therefore, is not to waste any more time looking in Philadelphia or in New Jersey for background. This is a New York City proposition.

any types Anything else you find in the New York papers relative to coinage, please advise me of and I will be very grateful.

I sincerely hope the foregoing will save you many hours of work and will enable you to devote your research in the right direction. Please check what I have said to be sure I am correct as I make errors routinely myself.

Sincerely,

EPN:dv